FUNERAL CHORALS

OF THE

UNITAS FRATRUM

OR

MORAVIAN CHURCH

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THE TROMBONE CHOIR.

Among the beautiful customs which the modern Moravian Church has inherited from the fervent days in Herrnhut in the Zinzendorf era, there is none more distinctive or more beautiful than the use of trombones and other wind instruments to announce the death of a member of the Moravian Church, and to accompany the burial services.

Probably the custom was a gradual growth, keeping pace with the development of the Moravian congregations, and their division into "Choirs," a term which was not only used to signify a company of singers, but also certain other groups of persons who were closely banded together by mutual interests for a common purpose. Thus the association of trombonists was known as the Trombone Choir, while the Congregation itself was divided into choirs of married people, widows, and widowers, the choir of "single brethren" or unmarried men over eighteen years of age, the choir of "older boys" between fourteen and eighteen years old, the similar choirs of "single sisters" and "older girls," and the choir of children.

Just when trombones were introduced into Herrnhut does not appear. The first Easter service on the graveyard, at four o'clock in the morning of April 13, 1732, consisted of songs, and there is no record of instrumental music, but the Moravian emigrants to Georgia in 1735 took trombones and French horns. The diary of the Moravian Congregation in Savannah does not say how the trombones were used, but does state that when the Indian Chief Tomochichi died, the Moravians refused a request from General Oglethorpe to furnish trombone music at his funeral,—an idea which would scarcely have occurred to the General had the Moravians not so accompanied the interment of their own dead.

The origin of the announcement of a member's death by the trombones is also obscure. It was practiced in many of the German State churches where it corresponded to the tolling of bells elsewhere, and since there were so many distinct "Choirs" in the Moravian Congregation, it was natural that a special tune should come to be assigned to

each. Rev. C. A. Haehnle, of Nazareth, Pa., suggests that the schedule of tunes may have been arranged by Christian Gregor, a hymn-writer and skilled musician, who joined the Unitas Fratrum in 1742, served various congregations as organist until 1764, and filled important offices until his death in 1801. At least it seems safe to say that the use of trombones at funerals was established prior to 1736, and that the system of announcement hymns was elaborated before Zinzendorf's death in 1760. The full set of tunes and stanzas was printed in the German Moravian Liturgy Book of 1791, and subsequent editions, but they may well have been used long before that time.

The use of trombones is not universal throughout the modern Moravian Church. There are no Trombone Choirs in the English and many of the American congregations, nor on the mission fields, but wherever there is such a choir the music is highly prized, not only in connection with funerals but for the Easter services and other special occasions. The Moravian churches in Germany, and certain in America, cherish their Trombone Choirs, and with one exception all are still using the tunes selected in Herrnhut in the eighteenth century to announce the death of a member of the Congregation. In the stanzas associated with those tunes there have been some changes from time to time, but practically none in the thoughts expressed. The German stanzas have been published in Liturgy Books of various dates, while translations by Rev. C. A. Haehnle were printed in *The Moravian* about 1882. Other translations by Mr. F. W. Detterer, revised by Rt. Rev. J. Mortimer Levering, appear in *The Hand-book of the Moravian Congregation of Bethlehem,* 1891; and the stanzas used at Lititz are given on a card issued in 1902. On the following pages appear the stanzas now accepted in Herrnhut, Bethlehem, and Salem, as representing the German and the American Moravian Churches.

The announcement of a death has three distinct features. The Trombone Choir, stationed in the belfry or before the Church, plays a tune, the associated stanza referring to the departure of a member of the Congregation. This is followed by a tune which indicates to which "Choir" of the Congregation the deceased belonged, the married brethren, married sisters, widowers, widows, single brethren, single sisters, older boys, older girls, little boys, and little girls each having a special tune and stanza. After this the first tune is repeated, but with reference to another stanza, one which reminds the hearer that the Death Angel will some day come to him.

From the first there was much latitude allowed as to the hymns used during the burial services, various chorals being rendered when the congregation assembled in front of the church after the funeral discourse, as the procession passed to the graveyard, and during the interment. The chorals which follow are used in Salem, North Carolina, at the present time, and they are given to complete the series, and to show the faith and hope in which departing members are laid to rest in the quiet squares of the Moravian "God's Acre."

ADELAIDE L. FRIES.

Winston-Salem, N. C., 1905.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF DEATH.

The first choral is the same for all Choirs. It has special reference to the departed.

Tune 151 A.

Valet will ich dir geben,
Du arge, falsche Welt,
Dein sündlich böses Leben
Durchaus mir nicht gefällt.
Im Himmel ist gut wohnen,
Hinauf steht mein Begier;
Da wird Gott ewig lohnen
Dem, der Ihm dient allhier.

German Moravian Hymn Book — V. HERBERGER.
No. 1167, 1.

A pilgrim, us preceding,
Departs unto his home,
The final summons heeding
Which soon to all must come.
O joy! the chains to sever
Which burden pilgrims here,
To dwell with Christ forever,
Who to our souls is dear.

Translated from the Liturgy Book of 1823. — F. W. DETTERER.

The second choral indicates the Choir to which the departed belonged.

MARRIED BRETHREN.

Tune 83 D.

Jesus Christus lässt mich nicht!
Dessen freut sich meine Seele
Mit lebend'ger Zuversicht;
Und auch meine Leibeshöhle
Nimmt den Trost ins Grab hinein,
Dass sie Ihm wird ähnlich sein.

Liturgy Book of 1791. CHRISTIAN GREGOR.
German Moravian Hymn Book, No. 1164, 3.

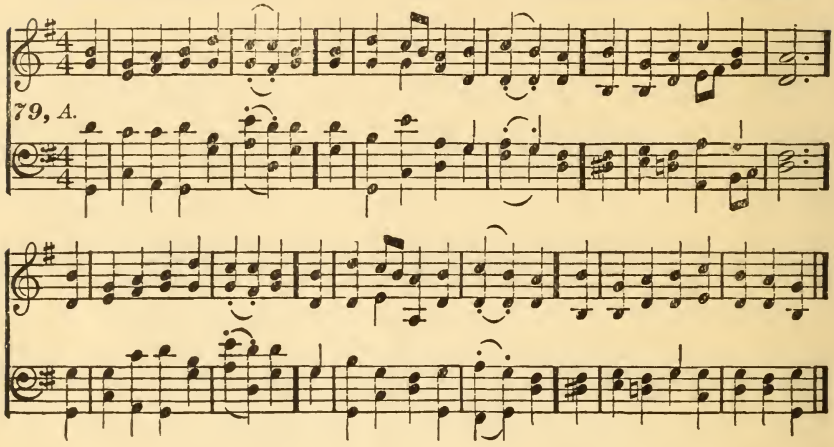
Jesus ne'er forsaketh me:
This my spirit greatly cheereth,
And my constant trust shall be.
Yea, though death at length appeareth,
Herein precious comfort lies,
I shall in His image rise.

Translated from above. F. W. DETTERER.

MARRIED SISTERS.

Tune 79 A.

INNSBRUCK.
Innsbruck, ich musz dich lassen. } (7, 7, 6, 7, 7, 8, or 8, 8, 6, 8, 8, 8, Iambic.) Heinrich Isaak, c. 1490.



Sein Seufzen und Sein Stöhnen,
Und die viel tausend Thränen,
  Die Ihm geflossen zu,
Die sollen mich am Ende
In Seinem Schoss und Hände
  Begleiten zu der ew'gen Ruh.

Liturgy Book of 1791. PAUL GERHARDT.
German Moravian Hymn Book, No. 91, 16.

His plea amid deep sighing,
'Mid bitter tears and crying,
  My soul with peace hath blest.
Be this my consolation
When, thanks to His salvation,
  I enter into lasting rest.

Translated from the Liturgy Book of 1823. F. W. DETTERER.

WIDOWERS.

Tune 132 A.

Gutes und die Barmherzigkeit
  Machen mir's hier erträglich,
Dass ich kann haben meine Freud',
  Am Haus des Herren täglich,
Auf Erd' in christlichen Gemein';
Und wenn ich heim darf, werd ich sein
  Bei Christo, meinem Herren.

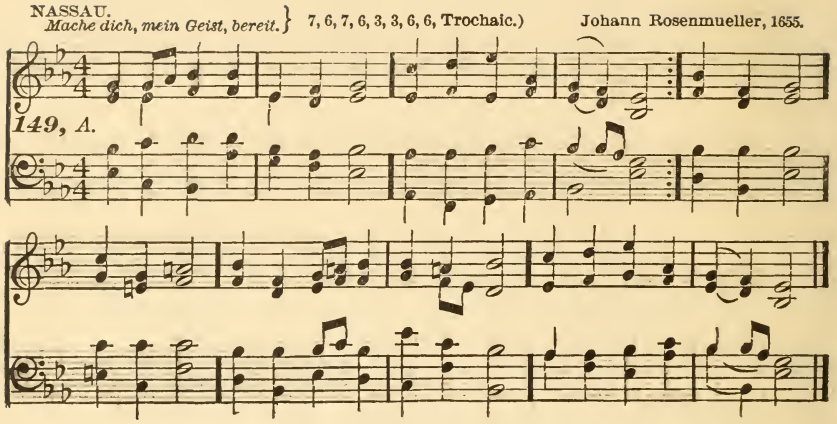
Liturgy Book of 1791. C. Becker.

His goodness and His mercies all
  Will follow me for ever;
And I'll pursue my heavenly call
  To cleave to my dear Saviour,
And to the Church, His body here;
And when called home, I shall live there
  With Christ, my soul's Redeemer.

American Moravian Hymn Book,
  Edition of 1864, No. 375, 4.

WIDOWS.

Tune 149, A.



Schickt das Herze da hinein
Alle Seine Kranken,
Wo ihr ewig wünscht zu sein!
Sinnen und Gedanken,
Weichet nicht von dem Licht,
Das dort droben scheinet,
Wo man nicht mehr weinet.

Liturgy Book of 1791. LUISE VON HAYN.
German Moravian Hymn Book, No. 1165, 1.

Lift thy heart, oh weary soul,
To the heavenly mansion,
On yon height, thy chosen goal,
Fix thy whole attention.
Ne'er lose sight of the light
Which from heaven He sendeth,
Where all sorrow endeth.

Translated from above. F. W. DETTERER.

SINGLE BRETHREN.

Tune 185 A.

Einig Herze, das soll meine Weide
Und schon hier mein Himmel sein,
Dir zu leben, dir allein zur Freude,
Leib und Seele dir zu weih'n.
Bin ich gleich kein Held, viel auszustehen,
Mag mir's darum gleichwohl immer gehen,
Blutges Herze, wie du willst,
Bis ich meinen Lauf erfüllt.

German Moravian Hymn Book, No. 917, 1. — ZINZENDORF.

Faithful Lord, my only joy and pleasure
Shall remain, while here I stay,
Thee, my matchless Friend and highest Treasure,
To adore, serve and obey;
Though I in myself am weak and feeble,
Yet I trust Thy grace will me enable
By obedience to Thy will
All Thy purpose to fulfill.

American Moravian Hymn Book,
Edition of 1864, No. 724, 2.

SINGLE SISTERS.

Tune 37 A.

Hier bleibt indes mein Los,
Ihn nachzuwallen,
Und meine Sorge bloss
Ihm zu gefallen.
Und dabei wart ich Sein
Mit Herzverlangen,
Bis Er in obern Reihn
Mich wird empfangen.

German Moravian Hymn Book, No. 1150. — CHRISTIAN GREGOR.

My happy lot is here
The Lamb to follow;
Be this my only care
Each step to hallow,
And thus await the time
When Christ my Saviour
Will call me hence, with Him
To live forever.

American Moravian Hymn Book,
Edition of 1864, No. 943.

OLDER BOYS.

Tune 23

Christi Tod erfüll hienieden
Mich schon früh mit Seinen Frieden,
Dass ich einst darauf mit Freuden
Könne von der Welt abscheiden.

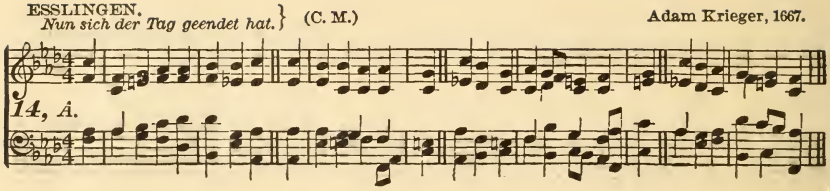
Slightly altered from the
Liturgy Book of 1791.

Jesus' grace me here possessing,
Early with His peace me blessing,
My soul knows nor fear nor sadness,
Seeks its final home with gladness.

Translation of above. F. W. DETTERER.

OLDER GIRLS.

Tune 14, A.



Herr Jesu, Deine Gnadenwahl
Befördre meinen Lauf.
Nimm meinen Namen in die Zahl
Der Kinder Gottes auf.

German Moravian Hymn Book, No. 604, 7. — ZINZENDORF.

Lord Jesus, let Thy grace abound,
Me onward still direct;
Oh, Saviour, may my name be found
Among Thine own elect.

Translated from above. — F. W. DETTERER.

LITTLE BOYS.

Tune 39, A.

Was ist denn für Kinder das Beste auf Erden?
Früh Schäflein des ewigen Hirten zu werden;
Die weidet Er hier schon auf seliger Weide
Und droben bei Sich in unendlicher Freude.

Liturgy Book of 1823.

The Lord to His fold little children inviteth,
His bounty the lambs of His pasture delighteth;
E'en here the Good Shepherd provides ample pleasures,
Above, in His presence, are unfading treasures.

Translation of above. F. W. Detterer.

LITTLE GIRLS.

Tune 82, D.

Sollt ich nun nicht fröhlich sein,
Ich beglücktes Schäfelein?
Denn nach diesen schönen Tagen
Werd ich endlich heimgetragen
In des Hirten Arm und Schoss,
Amen! ja, mein Glück ist gross!

Liturgy Book of 1791. LUISE VON HAYN.
German Moravian Hymn Book, No. 844, 3.

Should not I for gladness leap,
Led by Jesus, as His sheep?
For when these blest days are over,
To the arms of my dear Saviour
I shall be conveyed to rest;
Amen, yea, my lot is blest.

American Moravian Hymn Book,
No. 366, 3.

CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT CHORAL.

The third choral is the same for all Choirs. It has special reference to the living.

Tune 151, A.

Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden,
So scheide nicht von mir;
Wenn ich den Tod soll leiden,
So tritt Du dann herfür;
Wenn mir am allerbängsten
Wird um das Herze sein,
So reiss mich aus den Aengsten
Kraft Deiner Angst und Pein.

PAUL GERHARDT.

German Moravian Hymn Book, No. 108, 9.

Translated from the Latin of Bernard of Clairvaux.

Lord, when I am departing,
Oh! part Thou not from me!
When mortal pangs are darting,
Then call me home to Thee!
Thy death's atoning merit
From death hath set me free;
Thus saved, I shall inherit
Eternal life in Thee.

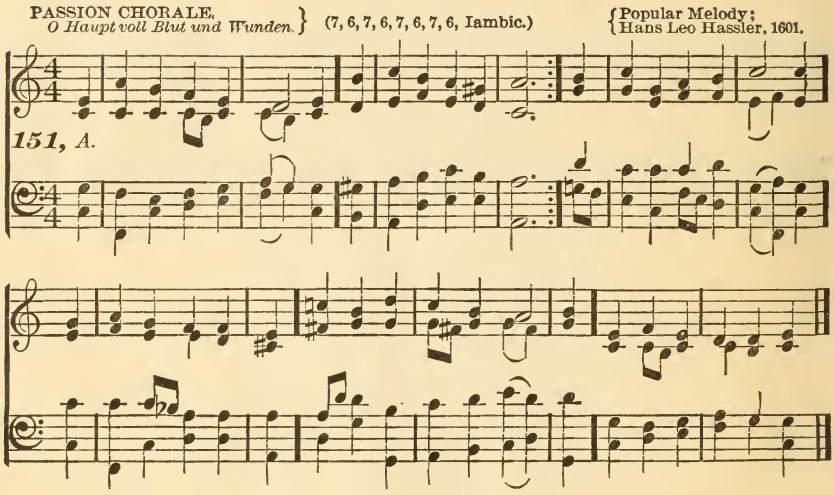
J. W. ALEXANDER, *and* F. W. DETTERER.

Translated from above.

FOR BURIAL SERVICES AT SALEM, N. C.

IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH.

Tune 151, A.



Grant me to lean unshaken
Upon Thy faithfulness,
Until I hence am taken,
To see Thee face to face.

American Moravian Hymn Book, No. 120, 2, second half.

Bernard of Clairvaux.

ENTERING CEDAR AVENUE.

Tune 168, A.

Jesus, Source of my salvation,
Conqueror both of death and hell,
Thou Who didst as my Oblation,
Feel what I deserve to feel,
Through Thy sufferings, death and merit,
I eternal life inherit;
Thousand, thousand thanks to Thee,
Dearest Lord, for ever be.

American Moravian Hymn Book, No. 131, 1. E. C. Homburg.

ENTERING THE GRAVEYARD.

Tune 205, A.

Jesus, lover of my soul,
  Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the raging billows roll,
  While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
  Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide:
  O receive my soul at last.

American Moravian Hymn Book, No. 364, 1. — CHARLES WESLEY.

DURING THE INTERMENT.

Tune 14, A.

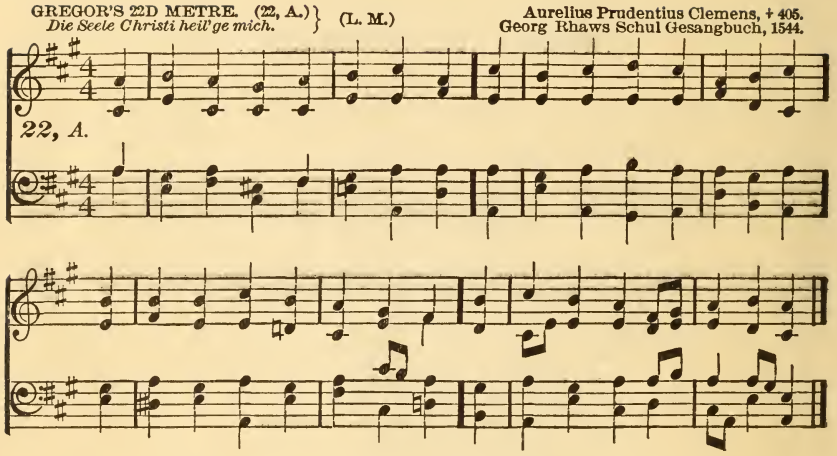
ESSLINGEN, *Nun sich der Tag geendet hat.* (C. M.) Adam Krieger, 1667.

Now to the earth let these remains
In hope committed be;
Until the body, changed, attains
Blest immortality.

American Moravian Hymn Book, No. 878, 3. GOTTFRIED NEUMANN.

AT CLOSE OF SERVICE.

Tune 22, A.



The Saviour's blood and righteousness
My beauty is, my glorious dress,
Thus well arrayed, I need not fear,
When in His presence I appear.

American Moravian Hymn Book,
No. 302, 1.

PAUL EBER.

LEAVING THE GRAVEYARD.

The tune indicating the Choir of the departed is used.

(See pages 7 to 16.)

CLOSING.

Tune 159, A.

'Tis the most blest and needful part
To have in Christ a share,
And to commit our way and heart
Unto His faithful care;
This done, our steps are safe and sure,
Our hearts' desires are rendered pure,
And naught can pluck us from His hand,
Which leads us to the end.

CHRISTIAN RENATUS VON ZINZENDORF.

American Moravian Hymn Book,
No. 402, 1.